
Sister Institution Network Fund Application Guidelines

Global Academic Programs (GAP) at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center is pleased to announce the opportunity to apply for funding through the Sister Institution Network Fund (SINF) program. The mission of the SINF program is to seed collaborative research between investigators at MD Anderson and our partner institutions, including Sister Institutions, extensions and other global collaborators with a goal of improving the competitiveness of such grant proposals submitted to external agencies.

DEADLINE: Monday, December 19, 2016

Applicants Must Submit:

- *Application Form*
- *NIH Biosketches (including Other Support)*
- *Research Plan*

✓ *One complete electronic version with all three components (in one PDF file) to the SINF mailbox, SINF@mdanderson.org*

****No Hard Copies Needed****

New Submissions: 7-page maximum for research plan and bibliography

Resubmissions: 8-page maximum for research plan and bibliography, including 1-page response to reviewers' critiques

Application guidelines and instructions may be obtained from:

Global Academic Programs' SINF web page www.mdanderson.org/SINF and MD Anderson's Office of Research Administration intranet page - [ORA - Internal Funding](#)

CONTACT for questions about preparation and submission of applications:

Javier Guerrero, jaguerra@mdanderson.org, 713/563-4405

Ivan Lopez, ivan.lopez@mdanderson.org, 713/794-1744

SINF Mailbox, SINF@mdanderson.org

APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

Individual awards are up to \$100,000, distributed over a 1 or 2 year period. Deadlines will be announced on Global Academic Programs' SINF web page: www.mdanderson.org/SINF and via email.

An electronic copy (one PDF file) should be sent to SINF@mdanderson.org. We also encourage you to send your SINF proposal to Scientific Publications, via email to scientificpublications@mdanderson.org, for editing at least 2 weeks before the deadline.

Eligibility.

All MD Anderson faculty at the ranks of Assistant, Associate and full Professor are eligible, including tenure track/tenured faculty, and faculty with Research Faculty Appointments or Clinical Faculty Appointments. **Faculty who are currently supported by the SINF cannot apply for further awards.** Funds awarded may not be used as a bridge for interim funding of ongoing work.

External partners can be Sister Institutions, Extensions or be affiliated with MD Anderson via Memoranda of Understanding. The participating partners are listed in the Request for Application that is published when a call for submissions is made.

Review Criteria.

Members of the SINF Study Section read the proposals and evaluate them much as proposals sent to an agency of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are reviewed. After discussion, each member of the study section scores the proposal. The scores are then averaged. The Sister Institution Program Review Committee provides input on strategic priorities. The International Advisory Board (IAB) determines the funding payline based on available funds. Final funding decisions are made by the Provost & Executive Vice President and the President of MD Anderson.

Scoring is based on the following NIH review criteria (for more detail please visit the NIH critiques web page: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/critiques/rpg.htm>):

- **Significance.** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?
- **Investigator(s).** Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? Early Stage Investigators or New Investigators, or in the early stages of independent careers, do they have appropriate experience and training? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; is their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?
- **Innovation.** Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new

application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

- **Approach.** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?

If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

- **Environment.** Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

Resubmitted Applications.

A grant application that was not funded by the SINF may be resubmitted **a second time**, provided the PI is still eligible, critiques of the prior application are addressed comprehensively, point by point, and **all revisions are clearly indicated by boldface in the body of the proposal**. In addition, a complete summary of the changes, including an explanation for each item that was critiqued but not changed, should appear at the beginning of the Research Plan. An extra page in overall length of the application is permitted to accommodate this information.

Funding Duration.

The awards are limited to \$100,000, which may be spent over 1 or 2 years. Whether 1 or 2 years is desired must be stated at the top of the budget page, and if 2 years of support are requested, each year must be budgeted separately.

Budget.

Effort:

Percentage of effort should be completed for all personnel, including PI. Effort should be listed in calendar months. (*Example: 50% effort = 6 months*)

Allowable expenditures include:

- Research supplies and animal maintenance
- Technical assistance - research nurses, data managers, protocol coordinators, research assistants, research associates, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and laboratory technicians (salary plus 28% fringe benefits)
- Tuition, if thorough budget justification is provided
- Costs of computer time
- Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.)
- Stipends for graduate students and postdoctoral assistants if their role is to promote and sustain the project presented
- Travel by personnel directly involved in the project, to collaborating institutions as part of the work
- Publication costs (journal charges) limited to \$500 per year

Unallowable expenditures include:

- Faculty/Secretarial/Administrative salaries
- Books and periodicals
- Membership dues
- Office and laboratory furniture
- Office equipment and supplies
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
- Patient care costs
- Construction, renovation, or maintenance of building/laboratories
- Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
- Travel - general business travel not related to the project
- Consortium/Contractual Costs

Budget Justification.

The budget for all personnel positions (including PI and collaborators), equipment items \geq \$1,000, and individual supply items \geq \$2,000 should be itemized and justified in detail.

Requests for computers, temporary housing, tuition and other school costs must be thoroughly justified and are subject to approval.

Length of Application and Pagination.

- New Submissions - Seven (7) pages for the research plan and bibliography. **Applications exceeding these limits will be returned.**
- Resubmissions - Eight (8) pages for the research plan and bibliography, to include 1 page response to reviewers' critiques.
- **All pages must be typed using 10-12 point font size; ¾ (.75) inch side, top and bottom margins; and numbered at the bottom.** The font restrictions also apply to the bibliography section.

Other Funding Sources.

Under "Other Research Support/Funding Sources" in the NIH-style Biosketch that is required for each PI, provide **ALL CURRENT AND PENDING** support for the PI. Other Support includes **ALL** financial resources, whether Federal, non-Federal, commercial, donor, or institutional support, available in direct support of an individual's research endeavors, including but not limited to research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, donors, foundations, industry sources, institutional start-up funds, bridge funding and/or institutional awards. Please include the title and budget from all other funded and pending sources for the PI. This section should include the, total costs and specific aims from all other funded and pending sources (formatted the same as required for NIH Other Funding) for the PI.

Signatures.

The applicant should sign the Principal Investigator Certification, located at the bottom of page 1 of the application form. The applicant's Department Chair and/or Division Head (if appropriate) should also review and sign the application form at the bottom of page 1.

Submission.

One electronic copy including application and research file (one PDF file) should be sent via email to SINF@mdanderson.org by 5 p.m. on the due date. No hard copies are needed.

Notification of Award.

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) will notify awardees after approval.

Following notification of an award, the PI is required to submit a RCTS record. Certification and Department Chair approval must be obtained in the record. Funds will not be released until all regulatory issues involved with the research are approved. Applications involving human subjects or human tissues, animals, or biohazardous materials **must have** the appropriate committee (IRB, IACUC, IBC) approval(s) prior to an award of funds.

All awardees must comply with the institutional Conflict of Interest Policy ([UTMDACC Policy ADM0255](#)).

Award begins after RCTS record has been completed and all compliance requirements have been met.

Progress Reports from Awardees.

Progress reports on the use of the funds must be completed and emailed to SINF@mdanderson.org after year one, and before year two funds can be released. A final progress report on the outcome of the research, describing the research accomplishments, publications, and/or presentations and extramural funding received as a result of the grant must be submitted within **3 months** after the end of the award period. An SINF progress report template can be requested by sending an email to SINF@mdanderson.org.

Residual Funds.

Any funds remaining beyond the 2-year award period must be returned to the funding pool.

Application guidelines and instructions may be obtained from:

Global Academic Programs' SINF web page www.mdanderson.org/SINF and MD Anderson's Office of Research Administration intranet page - [ORA - Internal Funding](#)

CONTACT for questions about preparation and submission of applications:

Javier Guerrero, jaguerra@mdanderson.org, 713/563-4405

Ivan Lopez, ivan.lopez@mdanderson.org, 713/794-1744

SINF Mailbox, SINF@mdanderson.org

MD Anderson Sister Institution Network Fund Grant Application

Instructions for Preparing the Research Plan

Revised Applications: For revised applications that are resubmitted, the Research Plan should begin with a summary of the revisions, which should be marked in **boldface** in the body of the application.

Specific Aims: Introduce the topic, state what is known about the topic, and state what is not known (the gap in knowledge as related to the objective of your overall proposal). State the central hypothesis that you propose to test or the purpose of the overall proposal. It should be related to the gap in knowledge. List the Specific Aims by which you will test the hypothesis or accomplish your purpose. State your long-term goal. (Recommended: 1 page)

Significance: Briefly sketch the background to the proposal and critically evaluate existing knowledge to provide context. Focus on the importance of the proposed work, and how it will impact the field, for example by changing how cancer is diagnosed, treated, monitored or prevented. Identify key outcomes that would be achieved if the work proposed is successfully completed. (Recommended: ½ page)

Relevance to Sister Institution Network: Explain how this proposal makes use of one or more Sister Institution or Extension relationships to further the proposed research. If appropriate, identify possible future stages in the proposed work that could include additional members of the Sister Institution Network. For example, in the first phase a SINF-supported project might identify a biomarker or agent which in a second phase could be used in clinical investigations in several Sister Institutions. (Recommended: ½ page)

Preliminary Studies: Applicants may employ this section to provide an account of the principal investigators' studies pertinent to the application and/or any other information, which will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. (Recommended: 1 page)

Design and Procedure: Describe the experimental design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the work described in the application. Focus on experimental design and not on methodological detail. Describe how data will be analyzed and interpreted, including statistical methods where appropriate. Describe new methodology and its advantage over any existing methodology. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims. Include a brief description of any specialized, non-typical physical resources that may be necessary. (Recommended: 3 pages)

References: Cite key published literature to substantiate contentions, with either citation numbers in parentheses or as superscripts, and provide the complete references in a list at the end of the Research Plan. Do not provide the reference in the text. Each reference must include the names of all authors, the name of the book or journal, volume number, page numbers and year of publication. There is no need to cite extensive literature – confine the list to the key papers that provide the background to your proposal. (Recommended: 1 page)